What is claimed is:

1   1.   A communication method comprising the steps of:

2   receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a first

3   recipient; and

4   prompting the first sender for permission to convey the IM message to the second

5   recipient.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

2   receiving an input from the first sender, the input being indicative of the

3   permission to convey the IM message to the second recipient; and

4   conveying the IM message to the second recipient in response to receiving the

5   input.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

2   indicating to the first sender that the IM message is being conveyed to the second

3   recipient.

1   4.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

2   indicating to the second recipient that the IM message originated from the first

3   sender.

1   5.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

2   determining whether the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a

3   second sender; and

4   indicating to the first sender, in response to determining that the first recipient is

5   engaged in an IM chat session with a second sender, that the first recipient is engaged in

6   an IM chat session with a second sender.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

2   waiting a predefined time interval prior to requesting prompting the first sender

3   for permission.

1   7.   The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of:

2   indicating to the first sender, in the absence of a response from the first recipient

3   during the predefined time interval, that the first recipient is unavailable.

1   8.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of requesting permission from the

2   first sender is responsive to an absence of an input from the first recipient during the

3   predefined time interval.

1   9.   A communication method comprising the steps of:

2   receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a first

3   recipient; and

4   conveying the IM message to a second recipient.

1   10.   The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:

2   indicating to the first sender that the IM message is being conveyed to the second

3   recipient.

1   11.   The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:

2   indicating to the second recipient that the IM message originated from the first

3   sender.

1   12.   The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

2   determining whether the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a

3   second sender; and

4   indicating to the first sender, in response to determining that the first recipient is

5   engaged in an IM chat session with a second sender, that the first recipient is engaged in

6   an IM chat session with a second sender.

1   13.   The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

2   further indicating to the first sender, in response to determining that the first

3   recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a second sender, that an IM chat session is

4   being established between the first sender and the second recipient.

1   14.   A communication system comprising:

2   receive logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first

3   sender to a first recipient; and

4   prompting logic configured to prompt the first sender for permission to convey the

5   IM message to the second recipient.

1   15.   A communication system comprising:

2   means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a

3   first recipient; and

4   prompting the first sender for permission to convey the IM message to the second

5   recipient.

1   16.   A computer-readable medium comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an

3   instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a first recipient; and

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to prompt the

5   first sender for permission to convey the IM message to the second recipient.

1   17.   The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an

3   input from the first sender, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM

4   message to the second sender; and

5   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to convey the

6   IM message to the second recipient in response to receiving input from the first sender.

1   18.   The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

3   the first sender that the IM message is being conveyed to the second recipient.

1   19.   The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

3   the second recipient that the IM message originated from the first sender.

1   20.   The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

3   whether the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a second sender; and

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

5   the first sender, in response to determining that the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat

6   session with a second sender, that the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with

7   a second sender.

1   21.   The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to wait a

3   predefined time interval prior to requesting the input from the first sender.

1   22.   The computer-readable medium of claim 21, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

3   the first sender, in the absence of a response from the first recipient during the predefined

4   time interval, that the first recipient is unavailable.

1   23.   A communication system comprising:

2   receive logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first

3 sender to a first recipient; and

4   conveying logic configured to convey the IM message to a second recipient.

1   24.   A communication system comprising:

2   means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a

3 first recipient; and

4   means for conveying the IM message to a second recipient.

1   25.   A computer-readable medium comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an

3 instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a first recipient; and

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to convey the

5 IM message to a second recipient.

1   26.   The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

3 the first sender that the IM message is being conveyed to the second recipient.

1   27.   The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

3 the second recipient that the IM message originated from the first sender.

1   28.   The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

3 whether the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a second sender; and

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to

5 the first sender, in response to determining that the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat

6 session with a second sender, that the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with

7 a second sender.

1   29.   The computer-readable medium of claim 28, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to further

3 indicate to the first sender, in response to determining that the first recipient is engaged in

4 an IM chat session with a second sender, that an IM chat session is being established

5 between the first sender and the second recipient.